

031, 2000

Silver-mine train line is revived

New management rebuilds historic locomotives, rails

By Chris Roberts
Associated Press

CHAMA, N.M. — When the team-powered locomotives of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad began chugging up the mountain toward Antonito, Colo., passengers were hoping to find the ride a bit smoother.

"The (Federal Railroad Administration) inspected us . . . and gave us a clean bill of health," said Kim Smith Flowers, marketing manager for the Rio Grande Railway Preservation Corp., the new railroad operator.

Nearly \$300,000 had been invested in evening out the old rails, rebuilding the locomotives and repainting and reupholstering the interior of the passenger cars. The first day of operation under the new management was scheduled for Saturday.

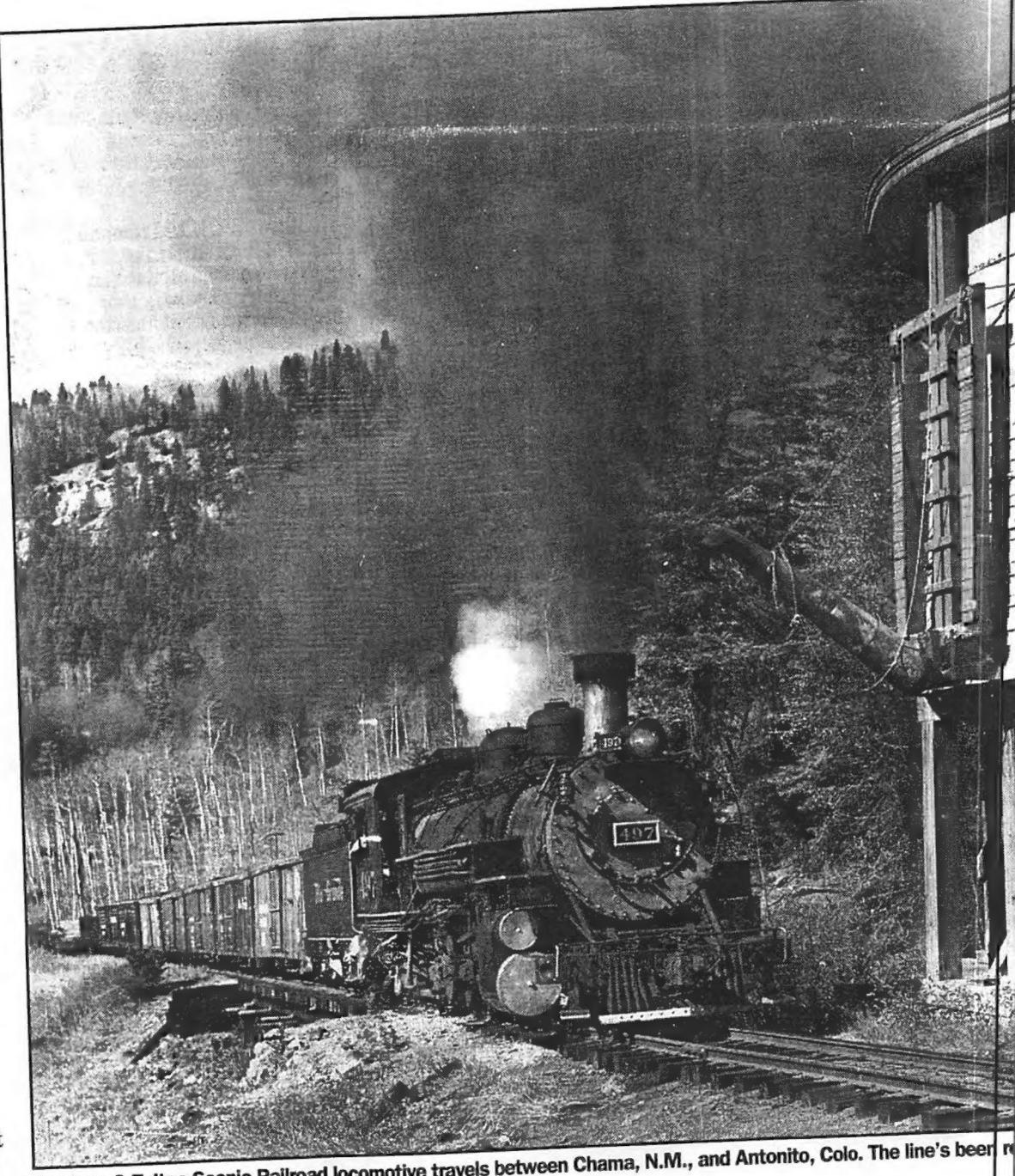
Smith Flowers said the weight of the trains pushed the rails down into the ground and that the unevenness caused the cars to sway back and forth.

"Last year, they (passengers) experienced a lot of rocking motion," she said.

But since workers jacked up 20 miles of rail to bolster them with dirt and gravel and replaced aging ties, the track is ready for traffic, she said.

Smith Flowers said the old operator was "released from its contract for lack of maintenance on engines and the track."

"Now that it's a not-for-profit corporation, a lot of the money is going back into the train," she said. "The



Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad locomotive travels between Chama, N.M., and Antonito, Colo. The line's been

The line originally was built in the 1880s to serve silver-mining out-

auditor is examining the railroad to determine whether it qualifies for a \$1 million grant from the federal

rebuilt at one of the few remaining shops that have the tools, parts and experience to fix them.'

"You can't go to the auto parts

